A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT IN EDUCATION[1]

КОМПАРАТИВНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ТРАДИЦІЙНОГО ТА ДЕМОКРАТИЧНОГО ПІДХОДІВ ДО ОЦІНЮВАННЯ У СИСТЕМІ ОСВІТИ

Pylypchuk M.L.,
PhD, Assossiate Professor,
Associate professor at the English Philology and Translation Department
National Aviation University

Melnyk N.I.,
DrS, Associate Professor,
Acting Dean of the Faculty of Linguistics and Social Communications, Chief Research of the Scientific&Reseach Department
National Aviation University

Konoplianyk L.M.,
PhD, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Foreign Languages and Translation Department
National Aviation University

This article analyses the connection between democracy and education and highlights the main democratic principles that can be applied to educational process and assessment. It especially compares traditional and democratic assessment paradigms to draw implications for educational policies and practices. The research employs a wide literature review to sum up theoretical information gathered from diverse fields. The attention is paid to scientific inquirs of prominent world scholars as J. H. Pestalozzi, J. Dewey, A. Lind, R. Meylani, and others. The research studies four elements that support the process of democratization of education as linking learning to life; independence and activity in the learning process; the ability to adapt to a changing reality; the ability to cooperate with people in all kinds of activities. The traditional assessment methods include summative assessment, formative assessments and standardized testing. Traditional methods are noted for their simplicity and wide acceptance, providing consistent metrics for measuring student achievement. However, they often fail to accommodate diverse learning styles and do not foster critical skills such as creativity and teamwork. Traditional approaches have also been proven insufficient in expressing students' individual and socio-cultural characteristics. The traditional assessment paradigm is considered relatively authoritative. The traditional approach assumes competitive learning while the democratic approach keeps the principle of equality, personification, and independence. Democratic approaches stand out for their ability to reveal human potential and adapt to diverse circumstances. Democratic principles of liberty, equality, responsibility, justice, and cooperation find full realization in a modern (democratic) assessment paradigm through game-based assessment, interprofessional education assessment, portfolio assessment, adaptive testing, and reflective practices. Consequently, the democratic approach in education makes the assessment process innovative, collaborative, self-regulated, purposeful, and contextual that yields better academic results. Despite their potential, these methods face challenges like higher resource demands, technological integration complexities, as well as validity and reliability. The article concludes that the best choice is to use the democratic assessment approach predominantly, sometimes combining it with the traditional one, for example, in terms of testing.
Key words: assessment paradigm, comparative analysis, democratization of education, democratic approach, traditional approach.

У цій статті аналізується проблема демократизації освіти й висвітлюються основні демократичні принципи, які можуть бути застосовані до освітнього процесу та оцінювання. Зокрема, порівнюються традиційні та демократичні парадигми оцінювання, щоб визначити їхні переваги та недоліки й зробити висновки для оптимізації освітньої практики. Дослідження охоплює широкий огляд літератури для узагальнення теоретичної інформації, зібраної з різних галузей. Увагу приділено науковим пошукам видатних світових вчених, таких як Й. Г. Песталоцці, Д. Дьюї, А. Лінд, Р. Мейлані та інших. У статті розглядаються чотири елементи, які підтримують процес демократизації освіти: зв'язок навчання з життям; самостійність і активність у процесі навчання; здатність адаптуватися до мінливої дійсності; здатність співпрацювати з людьми в усіх видах діяльності. До традиційних методів оцінювання належать підсумкове оцінювання, формувальне оцінювання та стандартизоване тестування. Традиційні методи відзначаються своєю простотою та широким визнанням, надаючи узгоджені показники для вимірювання навчальних досягнень учнів. Однак вони часто не враховують різноманітні стилі навчання і не сприяють розвитку таких важливих навичок, як креативність і робота в команді. Традиційні підходи також виявилися недостатніми для вираження індивідуальних і соціокультурних особливостей учнів. Традиційна парадигма оцінювання вважається відносно авторитарною. Традиційний підхід передбачає конкурентне навчання, в той час, як демократичний підхід зберігає принцип рівності, персоніфікації та незалежності. Демократичні підходи вирізняються здатністю розкривати людський потенціал та адаптуватися до різноманітних обставин. Демократичні принципи свободи, рівності, відповідальності, справедливості та співпраці знаходять свою реалізацію в сучасній (демократичній) парадигмі оцінювання через ігрове оцінювання, міжпредметне оцінювання, оцінювання-портфоліо, адаптивне тестування та рефлексивні практики. Отже, демократичний підхід в освіті робить процес оцінювання інноваційним, інтерактивним, саморегульованим, цілеспрямованим і контекстним, що сприяє кращим результатам успішності. Попри свій великий потенціал, ці методи мають певні складнощі, такі як залежність від технічних ресурсів, проблеми технологічної інтеграції, а також валідність і надійність. У статті зроблено висновок, що найкращим вибором є використання переважно демократичного підходу до оцінювання, тоді як традиційний підхід можна деколи використовувати у процесі тестування.
Ключові слова: парадигма оцінювання, порівняльний аналіз, демократизація освіти, демократичний підхід, традиційний підхід.

Problem statement and its connection with the urgent scientific or practical tasks. Modern democratic societies rely on education for its greatest support and constant companionship. Democracy and education have a reciprocal relation, and one cannot thrive without the other [1; 2; 3]. Without education, democratic societies limit relevance and effectiveness, and without democracy education loses its meaning. The example of this correlation is that democracy is committed to giving freedom to the people. At the same time, if they are not educated, then their freedom may lead to anarchy and indiscipline.

Democratization of education

Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer J. H. Pestalozzi has observed that a person should be made free and provided with stimuli in education for developing his/her self-reliance. He stated that in a democracy, the emphasis is on education through freedom, and it is imperative for the child to be educated in an environment of freedom. Thus, all mentioned above proves that democratic principles of liberty, equality, responsibility, justice, and cooperation should find full realization in education to make it effective and meaningful.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the American philosopher and educator J. Dewey realized the need to develop an alternative method of education where students, as members of a democratic society, could realize their human potential. He developed the concept of democratizing lessons as "education by experience, through experience and for experience" [2]. Nowadays, it is also known as experiential learning and refers to any interaction, program, or course that promotes hands-on learning. Dewey identified four elements that support the process of democratization:

– linking learning to life;

– independence and activity in the learning process;

– the ability to adapt to a changing reality;

– the ability to cooperate with people in all kinds of activities [3, p. 305].

These elements can be implemented into assessment in education that grants realization of the main democratic principles [3; 4]. The issue of comparative analyses of democratic and traditional assessment paradigms in education **is still poorly researched**.

Resent research and publications. The democratic principles of education are researched by A. Lind, S. Kula, T. Aytaç, J. Dewey. The issue of assessment is viewed in works of R. Meylani, M. Scriven, P. Black, D.Wiliam. Still, there is a lack of comparative works of traditional and democratic approaches for academic assessment that become **the aim of our research**.

Presentation of the main material. The origins of traditional assessment methods in education trace back to the early stages of formal education, primarily focusing on written tests and oral exams to evaluate a student's knowledge of the subject matter. There are several types of traditional assessment methods:

– summative assessment (evaluations conducted to ascertain if the learning goals have been accomplished after an educational session, such as a semester) [1];

– formative assessments (ongoing evaluations meant to assist teachers in modifying their methods and better-supporting students in achieving their learning goals);

– standardized testing (ongoing evaluations aimed at providing a standard gauge of pupils' performance).

Democratic assessment methods are varied and often include information technology and cutting-edge techniques to examine skills, abilities, and competencies. Modern techniques seek to assess higher-order thinking abilities like problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork, rather than conventional approaches, which typically concentrate on cognitive skills and information memory [5].

Some examples of democratic approaches include [4, p. 536–537]:

– game-based assessments (using gamified platforms and virtual reality environments to test students' knowledge and involve them in learning);

– interprofessional education assessment (aims to assess students' collaborative capability in professions such as health care, where cross-disciplinary collaboration is essential);

– portfolio assessments (students create a portfolio of their work, which might contain projects, written assignments, and other learning proof);

– adaptive testing (modifies the level of questions according to the test taker's performance in real time);

– reflective practices (practices that force students to reflect critically on their education – often via group discussions and self-evaluations).

Let us compare the traditional assessment paradigm to the democratic one.

Traditional assessment paradigm [4, p. 532–536; 5]:

Basing on the premise that students are not equal, the traditional assessment paradigm concludes that some will learn and some will not. Some will get A, some will get FX or F. The teacher's monologue is the main method of communication. The format of the lecture gives pupils the basis for understanding that teaching means telling. Coercive methods using fear, shame, threats of punishment and repressive control are used to ensure that "students learn". Students are evaluated for their obedience according to subjective rules and standards. In the traditional method, conflicts, mistakes, and misconceptions are viewed as negative and often lead to judgement of the student, poor grades, and immediate punishment. Conflicts should be resolved quickly and avoided. The human

dignity of students suffers when the assessment of their work and growth is reduced to a numerical score. There is no interactive exchange between a teacher and a student. Impersonal assessment can build a wall that prevents free communication between a teacher and a student.

The traditional approach pays more attention to external rewards (grades, certificates of merit, teacher's praise). It is frequently confusing and out of touch with the realities of the world around us and the experiences and understandings of students. There is little or no choice, and the teacher's opinion is final. The teacher assumes full responsibility for the leadership and atmosphere conducive to learning, diminishing the learner's sense of responsibility and influence in the learning process. Autocratic, one-man decision-making ensures that the teacher has complete power as he/she makes all decisions. Over-attachment to one standpoint on a particular issue in the traditional approach simplifies the thought process and promotes the development of unshakable truths and intolerance, limiting the ability to understand another person's perspective.

The traditional approach is based on the premise that all learners share a single cultural tradition and have the same understanding. There is only one correct answer. Quantitative assessments and right/wrong assessments teach students that "to know is to remember". There is one right approach, or method of teaching, and one dominant form of assessment (usually a "time-limited objective examination") that shows what students have learned. The teacher sets predefined objectives for the subjects and has appropriate quality standards and assessment criteria before the start of the class.

Emphasis is placed on competitive learning, where the success of one student is compared to the failure of another. Students are given the clear message that there are a few "winners" and many "losers", i.e., that to get better, someone needs to get worse. Academic achievement is the dominant and only criterion for evaluation, thus the social component and personal growth is diminishing. The final grade or "a big exam" is often the only way to assess students' knowledge. Students and teachers do not systematically assess what they think, feel and learn in the classroom. Knowledge is one-sided. Real knowledge is a linear sequence of facts and expert opinions. Learners typically only passively accept other people's knowledge. In the traditional approach, time is devoted to one individual at the expense of others. Students are frequently separated from the teacher and from each other, existing and learning among strangers.

Democratic assessment paradigm [4, p. 536–539]:

In the democratic approach, there is the premise that all students are equal. It means that everyone can learn and everyone can achieve. Everyone has the potential to get A. Small and large group dialogue and guided discussions (developing and discussing ideas) allow the teacher and students to arrive at truths, new understandings and new questions. This promotes more profound learning through a give and take approach that involves constant attention and feedback. Motivation to learn which involves voluntary cooperation, self-discipline, and mutual commitment strengthens the desire and commitment to learn. Students and teachers evaluate the extent to which and how the goals are being achieved.

The democratic approach promotes the open acknowledgement of academic and interpersonal difficulties and allows for constructive conflict resolution through class meetings, face-to-face conversations, or mediation. Conflicts, mistakes, and misconceptions enable students to learn to evaluate their thinking and actions and help them to "refine their skills". Face-to-face conversations, verbal "quick checks", and personal correspondence between student and teacher preserve dignity and help to reduce the distance between teacher and student.

The democratic approach puts more emphasis on intrinsic rewards and satisfaction from the learning process itself. The internal reward is in the work and successful completion of the project or task. This approach strives to be authentic and purposeful, connecting what learners learn to how they live. Authentic assessment involves students in presenting their work to real people and promotes work on real problems in society. Students have the freedom to choose what to learn, how to learn, with whom to learn, and how to demonstrate their learning. Responsibility for the atmosphere of the learning process lies with the teacher and student, who constantly develop and practice leadership skills to ensure that everyone feels responsible and is entitled to influence the learning process.

Shared decision-making in the democratic assessment paradigm means that the people affected by the decision are involved in the decision-making process. The teacher and learner use a process of shared decision-making that involves consensus and compromise, and that assesses the consequences of choices before making a responsible judgement based on facts. Students' opinions are also valued and encouraged. The use of multiple perspectives leads to a more complex thought process and promotes preliminary conclusions, understanding and perspective taking, and greater tolerance for ambiguity.

The democratic paradigm accepts cultural diversity, in which different cultural traditions shape the learning experience, and recognizes that learners have different cultural backgrounds and therefore different understandings. Hence, there are many possible answers, and the solution often depends on the context. Qualitative assessment helps learners

to understand that "knowledge must be used and applied".

The democratic approach encourages teachers and learners to become experts in using different strategies and approaches to learning, and for learners to use different means and experiences to discover what they have learned (demonstrations, inquiry and research, written and oral reflection, dialogue, presentations, series of works on the same topic, exhibitions, photo exhibitions, use of visual and audio aids, application of knowledge in the real world). Objectives and standards are developed and defined collaboratively. Learners define their learning objectives and all participate in the development of quality standards and assessment criteria. The emphasis is placed on a personalized approach to independent learning, learning together and collaborative problem-solving. Learners are encouraged to believe that they can all be "winners" and that working together helps to achieve better results and facilitates learning. Thus, all three components of learning are assessed, namely achievement in subjects, community service and personal growth. Teachers and students are involved in a process of continuous learning of experience and teaching evaluation, the system of knowledge acquisition and how the educational process is carried out (cognitively, socially and effectively). Knowledge is multifaceted. Learners are actively involved in constructing their understanding of the world, other people and themselves, using evidence, research and interactive dialogue.

Thus, let us recap the similarities and differences between traditional and democratic assessment [4, p. 540–541].

Common features:
– purpose of assessment;
– quality assurance;
– ethical considerations;
– ongoing evolution.

Distinct features:
– methodology;
– flexibility;
– technological integration;
– scalability;
– student-centered learning focus;
– emphasis on real-world applications;
– diversity of assessment strategies.

Conclusions and further research. There are many benefits to using democratic assessment techniques over more traditional ones. The ability for these approaches to be personalized helps to provide a more accurate depiction of a learner's skills and abilities. These techniques

promote student participation and interactive learning such as decision-making, project design, implementation, and polling, making education more dynamic and less memorization-focused. Therefore, in a democratic assessment, there is no such thing as a "gifted child". All children are gifted in different ways. The teacher's job is to help the child recognize his or her talents and uniqueness, and to promote their development. These modern approaches, meanwhile, have their drawbacks. The most urgent is the technical one. Educators must be adequately trained to utilize sophisticated computer systems and software, necessary to implement these techniques successfully. Since some of these techniques differ significantly from conventional evaluation criteria, concerns have been raised about their validity and reliability. Traditional assessment techniques are simple in use but are often criticized for failing to represent the complexity of growth and learning adequately. They also overlook pupils' socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic variety. That's why it seems rational for us to use the democratic assessment approach predominantly, sometimes combining it with the traditional one, for example, in terms of testing. The further research can encompass developing methods and activities for implementing democratic principles in the classroom and designing testing technologies following the democratic approach.

REFERENCES:

1. Black P., Wiliam D. Developing the theory of formative assessment. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*. 2009. № 21(1). P. 5–31. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9068-5

2. Kula S. S., Aytaç T. Comparative analysis of democratic attitude and value perceptions of school administrators, teachers, preservice teachers and students: A meta-analysis study. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*. 2022. № 9(1). P. 244–261. https://dx.doi.org/10.52380/ijpes.2022.9.1.558

3. Lind A.R. Dewey, Experience, and Education for Democracy: A Reconstructive Discussion. *Educ Theory*. 2023. № 73. P. 299–319. https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12567

4. Meylani R. A Comparative Analysis of Traditional and Modern Approaches to Assessment and Evaluation in Education. *Batı Anadolu Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*. 2024. №15. P. 520–557. https://doi.org10.51460/baebd.1386737

5. Gulikers J. T. M., Bastiaens, T. J., Kirschner, P. A. A five-dimensional framework for authentic assessment. *Educational Technology Research and Development*. 2004. Vol. 52. № 3. P. 67–86. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02504676